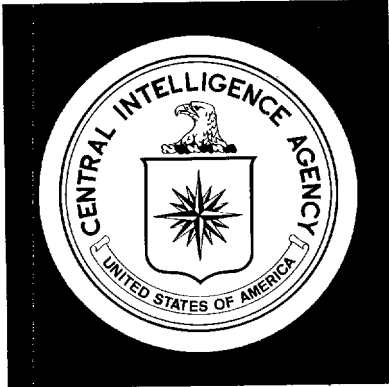
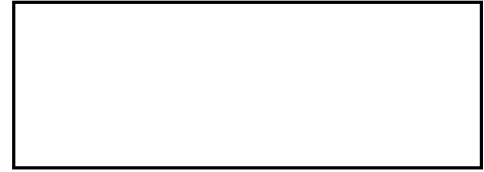


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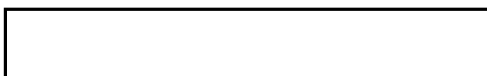
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USSR: Recent reports that international grain company representatives are visiting Moscow suggest that additional Soviet purchases of grain are now necessary.

Representatives of the international grain companies are discussing the execution of the grain contracts made last July and August. Shipping delays because of the late resolution of the US-Soviet maritime agreement have created problems. At the end of October, shipments were 1.7 million tons behind schedule and, unless conditions improve, the lag could reach three million tons by the end of November. In addition, some of the companies are reportedly discussing new contracts for rye and corn. Total US stocks of rye stand at only 1.6 million tons, but available US corn could easily cover any Soviet purchases.

Continued uncertainty over the final size and quality of this year's grain crop may be the reason for Soviet interest in even more grain, on top of the 28 million tons already purchased. By mid-October, a record eight percent of the total areas sown to grain--23.5 million acres--had not been threshed, indicating that a significant amount was lost. Some of the grain crop was probably abandoned or used for grazing in the European part of the RSFSR and the Ukraine, and the arrival of winter weather in Siberia and the Urals may have caused considerable losses there.

Moreover, the 1973 grain crop is off to a bad start. As the fall sowing campaign was ending, only 75 percent of the planned area was sown to winter grains--a record shortfall. The lack of soil moisture in some areas hit by the summer drought apparently prevented fall seeding. As in 1972, the barren areas will have to be resown next year with lower yielding spring grains.

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